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No. 16

House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

January 27, 2009.

I hereby appoint the Honorable SHEILA JACKSON-LEE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2009, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

TRIBUTE TO RAYMOND M. FITZGERALD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, today I come to the well and before my colleagues to remember one of my employees who was with me for 5 years and a true Chicago South Sider, an individual who worked diligently here in the Washington, D.C. community for many, many years, Ray Fitzgerald.

Ray was my legislative director for 5 years. Before that, he worked for the State of Illinois in Gov. Jim Edgar's administration. He then moved to the

Science Committee for 1 year, and then came to my office.

Ray, during his time here, met the love of his life, Kristin Wolgemuth, who also was a Congressional staffer and also from Chicago, and who had worked for Harris Fawell, a Congressman and Congresswoman JUDY BIGGERT from the Chicagoland area. They fell in love, got married, and then were able to enjoy D.C. and the community and work hard for this country. They have three children; Nora, 7, Maggie, 4, and Lucy, 2. Ray was a devout Roman Catholic, and Ray was able to live his faith, along with his wife, Kristin, and affect many lives positively.

Ray just last week lost his life in a terrible battle with cancer. Many of us from around the country attended his funeral yesterday in Chicago and the wake the night before. The wake was as large as you would expect when you have a loved one who has left you. Of course, the funeral was just as large, and I appreciated the funeral service focusing on the hope of salvation to those who believe, and remembering Ray's life.

But the thing that highlighted Ray's service here in Washington and the respect he garnered was his honesty, his transparency, the friendships that he developed and his work effort. Many people from the Washington, D.C. area went out for the wake and for the funeral yesterday, and we will pass the word out to the Washington, D.C. community about a memorial service that will be conducted here in Washington in the weeks to come. Kristin and the girls are coming out, along with Ray's mother and other family members and friends.

What was as important in this fight with cancer was the ministry that Kristin and Ray did as they struggled with what is God's will. Many times we pray for God's will to be done, hoping that it is the answer to our desires and aspirations and prayers. God's will in

this case was not for Ray to stay here on Earth, but to take him up in His loving arms with Him in Heaven and thus be truly healed.

This battle that was waged joined numerous people from across the country as Kristin was faithful in providing us the highs and the lows of the battles; the times when they were able to take the girls out to parks and to zoos and the times the family was very hopeful, but also times when Ray was really physically just struggling. She continued to ask for prayer and support and focus on her husband, her family and that loving environment.

One of the last e-mails I sent to them was talking about how they were able to comply with God's will. I really hated when Ray left Washington, D.C. He was a trusted confidant and a good friend. But, in hindsight, I see how God was preparing for his departure to get him in and around his family. He has five sisters. His mother is still there. Kristin has an extended family in that area. They were there to lift Ray, Kristin and the girls up and provide the love and care that they needed in this battle, and they will be there for the duration of strengthening the family and helping Kristin raise these three young girls.

I would like to share one of the last e-mails that Kristin sent to us as a whole on the announcement of her husband's death.

She writes, "Loved ones, oh to never have to write this e-mail. After meeting with all of Ray's doctors yesterday and today it is clear that they have done all they can do to fight his cancer."

"Despite the many rounds of chemo, the cancer is growing and getting stronger and Ray is much too weak to endure another round of chemo. Even if he weren't so sick, Ray's liver status renders chemo dangerous and ineffective."

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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